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High school students are given the opportunity to learn first hand how community organizations operate to improve the community. In preference to classroom study of the theoretical aspects of service organizations, the senior "current problems" classes were arranged so that students had one afternoon each week to devote to work in the various community agencies participating in the program. Participating agencies included the American Red Cross, the Enoch Pratt Library of Baltimore, the Girl Scouts, the Goodwill Industries, the Maryland Workshop for the Blind, the Health Department of Baltimore, the Eastern Community Council, and the Baltimore Safety Council. Although no formal evaluation studies were performed, it was obvious from the reports of the students and the participating agencies that the study had been successful.

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CIVIC PARTICIPATION: BALTIMORE PLAN

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Patterson Park High School

Department of Education

Baltimore, Maryland

January, 1953

ED002367 Bennett O. Stalvey

CIVIC PARTICIPATION: BALTIMORE PLAN

Picture a high school historically, geographically, and culturally separated from the rest of a large city.

Picture the pupils of such a high school, many of whom have never visited the main shopping district of Baltimore and few of whom have even seen the luxurious park-residential areas on the other side of the metropolis.

Picture further these boys and girls as chiefly descendants of recent immigrants from southern and eastern Europe and World War II migrants from the isolated pockets of the southeastern states.

Then, perhaps, the reader can imagine the inbredness and the urban insularity of these adolescents who were homogeneous only in their clannish absenteeism from the familiar activity of a sprawling city.

Such were the raw materials for the school's civic participation program.

Upon such a segment of young humanity, has a new approach to a Modern Problems course at the Patterson Park High School of Baltimore made a terrific impact.

For the social consciousness of such a group there has been opened a new vista of civic horizons and unveiled a new challenge of civic usefulness.

For the city there is revealed the opportunity to tap for the future a new source of public-minded citizenry. Civic participation promises a parent municipality more sons and daughters to relieve the pressure of increasing demands for those gratuitous services hitherto supplied by the time-on-hand "good doer".

CIVIC PARTICIPATION SETTING

An understanding of the origins of the learning experiences, the background of school population, the type of cooperating agency, and the characteristics of staff personnel involved in the civic participation program will help to make clear the purposes and accomplishments of this new venture in the Baltimore schools.

The civic participation program had its origins in the community study teachers' in-service program, initiated in September, 1946 under the direction of the Curriculum Bureau.[1] The community study program is a three-year project which aims at understanding the environmental and cultural influences that affect the child, revising the curriculum in terms of the pupils' needs and society's requirements, and working with community agencies for civic betterment. The program seeks to stimulate these three objectives as soon as teachers become participants.

To Helen Sharp, teacher of social studies at the Patterson Park High School and participant in the community study workshop, there seemed to be some practical changes that could be initiated in the modern problems courses she was handling. Here seemed to be a natural opportunity to stress civic participation rather than theory as learned in textbook reading.

1 Harry Bard -- Teachers and the Community, National Conference of Christians and Jews, Inc., 1952

The School's Locale And Setting

A description of the school population affected by civic participation is best given in the words of the school's teacher evaluation committee.

> The Patterson Park High School is a community school serving East and Southeast Baltimore. It is an area separated from other residential sections by the heart of the business district on the western edge and Clifton Park on the northern fringe. Within this territory live people of thirty-seven nationalities, predominantly second-generation Germans, Poles, Italians, Irish, English, Greeks, Bohemians, Russians and Lithuanians whose children attend the Patterson Park High School. A little over half of the parents and over ninety-five percent of the children were born in America. . .
>
> World War I brought in a laboring class to fill the jobs which were plentiful in the Bethlehem Steel Company, Sparrows Point Ship Building Company, American Refining and Smelting Company, Crown Cork and Seal Company, and many other industrial concerns -- all located not too far from the residential section. Steady employment, good wages, and comfortable living attracted more Polish and Bohemian people, along with the Italian. By the advent of the depression, the community -- South and Southeast Baltimore, was heavily populated.
>
> World War II brought many newcomers to work in the defense plants. Southerners from Tennessee, the Carolinas, Kentucky, and Virginia in large numbers were employed. War Housing Projects and Low Rental areas encouraged those people to remain in the Armistead Gardens and O'Donnell Heights developments after hostilities ceased. Their children attend our school. . .
>
> Poor housing conditions, industrial employment for housewives and mothers, and broken homes create new social problems for the adolescent. One third of the children attending this school live in houses which are occupied by six to ten persons. Overcrowded conditions in these homes have a disturbing effect on the adolescent when he has no privacy, no place to entertain his friends. . .
>
> Over one-third of our pupils indicate that a foreign language, chiefly German, Polish, Italian or Greek, is spoken in the home in place of English. Many more of our pupils hear a poor form of English at home. This language difficulty is a handicap to our pupils in their social contacts outside the community, and in their efforts to meet competition in the business world.[2]

2"Evalution of the Patterson Park High School", Patterson Park High School, Baltimore, 1951.

Relations with Community Agencies

The school was fortunate in its community relations in having the cooperation of many suitable agencies and their able personnel.

In selecting agencies for the program, the school applied these standards: (1) non-profit basis; (2) having an educational liaison worker; (3) agreeing to teach as well as benefit from students; (4) non-sectarian nature; (5) wide acceptance by the community.

There were leaders in the agencies who were able and willing to assume the responsibility of helping to work with youngsters at weekly sessions of students orientation, observation, and participation. These leaders understood the importance of avoiding any suggestion of "exploiting" the labor of children. Through proper orientation, students saw the voluntary performance of their tasks as being in the proper sphere of meaningful civic activity. Care was taken, for instance, that typing for the agency was only one of several activities participated in by students. Agencies as well as students appreciated the fact that this was a civic participation, not work experience program.

At one time or another, the following agencies have cooperated in civic participation:

American Red Cross
Enoch Pratt Library of Baltimore
Department of Public Recreation
Housing Authority of Baltimore
Girl Scouts
Goodwill Industries
Maryland Workshop for the Blind
Health Department of Baltimore
Eastern Community Council
Baltimore Safety Council

Professional Leadership

Administrative and supervisory leadership afforded the proper professional climate for civic participation.

Baltimore's superintendent believed in "moving the schools into the community and bringing the community into the schools." Moreover, he encouraged experimentation at the building level and stimulated the widest flexibility in curriculum development.

The principal of the school provided the immediate leadership so necessary to civic participation. Not only was he sympathetic to the ideas of sharing educative responsibility with outside agencies but he quickly solved the rigidities in schedule problems. The other subject departments were so oriented as to cooperated gladly with the needful shifting of class time in scheduling three afternoon periods in one day for the civic participation classes.

The city-wide supervisor and department head at the school helped to make available the required resource persons and materials, and also helped in the arrangements of civic participation programs as well as lending a hand for the many chores that are always necessary in the development of such projects.

The teacher's in-service experiences in the community study program led her to want to carry out important changes in her modern problems courses. Her keen interest in public affairs as well as her numerous contacts helped to promote the program.

Civic Participation in Operation

Planning

From the beginning, the planning of the program of civic participation has been based upon the ideal of the promotion of active citizenship. Thus there is substituted for the more usual approach of

the study of books, pamphlets, and magazine articles in the modern problems classes, the method of working directly with a number of civic agencies.

Three of the five weekly modern problems periods are brought together on one afternoon when the students are released at about noon to spend the rest of the school day working with the participating agencies. During the other two weekly periods in modern problems, the students plan, discuss, and evaluate their civic participation and relate their reading references to these experiences.

Orientation

The first stage of the civic participation program is the orientation of pupils in the purposes and activities of the cooperating agencies. Overview presentations are given by the agency leaders, either in the school or at the agency headquarters. The orientation sessions vary according to particular needs, with agency leaders often using demonstrations and audio-visual aids. Some of the better orientation programs are given at the headquarters of the cooperating agencies.

For example, explanations of the history and work of the Enoch Pratt Library are given at the branch library located in the vicinity of the school. At the Health Information Office, another group of youngsters receives a survey of the work of the Baltimore City Health Department. At the Maryland Workshop for the Blind the pupils are oriented to the insitution's occupational and educational activities. At the Baltimore Safety Council, pupils gain a background of the safety programs carried out in industry, in schools and through police and fire departments.

Observation

The second stage of student and agency relationship consists of the observation by the pupils of actual activities carried on in different parts of the city. They see materials, processes, and practices in action. They ask questions and receive on-the-spot answers.

For example, at the Goodwill Industries, a visit through their factory depicts to students the methods used in receiving, sorting, and repairing the clothing collected from the citizens of Baltimore and shows the value of this work. The Department of Recreation contact permits comparison of the pupils' own neighborhood recreation center with those in other parts of the city. The Housing Authority supplies an eye-opening tour of slum areas and a contrasting visit to the modern low-cost housing projects scattered over the city. The Red Cross organizes inspection trips to veterans' hospitals and mental institutions in order to have pupils observe their volunteer program in action.

During the observation stage there is also a tour of the Health Department's laboratory where technicians are carrying on examinations of specimens of food and water from all parts of the city. Provisions are made for a visit to a nearby district health center, at which time each student receives a chest X-ray. At the main branch of the public library the students see an operating bookmobile and receive a "behind-the-scenes" view of the receiving, cataloging, and distribution to branch libraries of incoming books.

The observation period of learning takes two or three months, with all students having an opportunity to see the cooperating agencies in action. During the observation period students become interested in a civic service that they want to select for participating experiences.

Participation

The orientation and observation stages of civic participation are familiar to hundreds of teachers over the country who conduct good citizenship programs in their social studies clases.

At the Patterson Park High School, however, the third stage — that of actual participation in the work of community agencies — achieves that level of learning generally found unattainable in other schools.

It is this level of learning that Patterson Park believes to be the most valuable and significant in its civic participation program. It is the real fulfillment for students of actual citizenship in their municipality, a psychological satisfaction reached logically after proper preliminary learning.

Students learn and act in the participation stage of the program. They are given tasks which show what is involved in the kind of services the agencies perform. These are tasks which have been performed by adults; these are tasks that — as volunteer adults in the future — these students can execute for the good of their community. These are tasks whose completion generates among students an immediate civic pride, a self-esteem in their usefulness to the adult world.

Moreover, these students act in an area of interest during the participation stage, when they make their own choice of but two agency experiences, each lasting from two to three months.

The examples of participation learning that are now offered, can, it is believed, be similarly achieved by teachers and pupils elsewhere, with proper planning and civic cooperation. Illustrations of these activities are noted below.

The Eastern Community Council is an agency which receives some municipal financial support in its aim to educate the people of east Baltimore to recognize their recreational, health, and other needs and then to fulfill these needs through cooperative efforts of the citizens. Pupils cooperated with the Council by conducting a door-to-door survey when they gathered information concerning the leisure time and activities of the more elderly residents, with the resultant formation of a Golden Age group for sixty-five year olds at the Recreation Center in the neighborhood.

The program of the civic participation clases as related to the Eastern Community Council, for the past three semesters, has been confined to promoting civil defense. The object of this program has been to determine the amount of interest in civil defense in the community and to stimluate additonal interst on the part of the local residents. Each group of students worked in the field on a door-to-door canvass. A total of 1305 homes were visited and answers were received at 736 of these.

At the Red Cross, two girls worked in the office during the subscription campaign. They performed all kinds of promotional work. Two other students worked in the Production Center filling the needs of various veteran hospitals. Yet other pupils worked in the Nutrition Center and made posters to be sent to schools, libraries and Red Cross centers. Perhaps the most important project with the Red Cross group was that related to the mental hospitals volunteer program in which connection students helped the "Grey Ladies" during recreational periods for patients. Here students did much to relieve the tensions of hospitalization. Another group of pupils working with the Red Cross took the Standard First Aid Course in order to act as assistants to the school nurse and to be ready as a stand-by emergency group during air-raid drills at the school.

At the city's public library the boys planned and executed two night programs for teen-agers. The first was on "Juvenile Delinquency". They arranged for a speaker, previewed the two films to be shown, prepared and conducted the program for the occasion. The second night affair was on "News". The editor of an East Baltimore paper, "The Guide", was invited to speak, and a film reviewing twenty years of news was shown.

In addition to these two projects the students performed many tasks concerning library work, such as making posters for different seasons of the year, and previewing films for the teen-agers. In general, students helped stimulate book circulation through a study of book use and to provide the library with films that teen-agers had reviewed and liked. In the past, films for teen-agers had been bought after adult review only.

One group of pupils worked with the Housing Authority of Baltimore in its study of an area of the city scheduled for dismantling and replacement by a new low cost housing project. In connection with this project, the boys tabulated the status of the families moved from their homes to ascertain if they were eligible for assignment to low price housing units.

Yet another project at the Housing Authority involved making a booklet — at teen-age level — on "Baltimore Slums and Housing." The boys selected the various phases of this topic and then went out and observed and collected data for the booklet. This was done under the supervision of the leader of the agency. After compiling the information, they criticized each others' work and then put the material together. Several of the boys made drawings for the booklet. After the boys completed their work, the material was mimeographed by the agency and copies circulated as part of a public relations program.

This excerpt from the booklet indicates the students' reactions:

The citizen's part

> These articles have acquainted you with the municipal attack on slums and what is being done to better housing in Baltimore City. Good citizenship is not only intelligent voting, but also real participation in and support of all municipal projects.
>
> The Citizens Planning and Housing Association of Baltimore is a voluntary, non-partisan agency, which is a real power behind the city's drive for decent housing. The CPHA was

such as is being done by the Baltimore Plan; the enlarging of health and housing codes; and sound zoning and city planning. Its main aim is educating the public about housing conditions and the need of better housing for Baltimore. The Citizens Planning and Housing Association arranges radio and video programs, lectures, exhibits, and general public discussions. Newsletters and detailed reports are sent to, and available for, interested civic organizations, and its own members.

A stimulated public is necessary to enforce action in the slum clean-up, slum clearance, and slum prevention fight. . .William Miller

Work in safety

The group of students that selected the Safety Council activities worked on a program of bicycle safety and inspection. Using the motto, the "bicyclers of today are the automobile drivers of tomorrow", they conducted campaigns in many of the elementary and junior high public schools of Baltimore.

On their first visit, the Patterson Park student group met with members of the host school's faculty to discuss the work for the following weeks. The faculty members selected the lower school pupils who would assist in the bicycle inspection. These were divided for the different fields of inspection including registration, seat adjustment, horns-headlights-reflectors, handle grips and handle bars, brakes-rear sprocket adjustment, pedals-chain guard, spokes-wheels-proper inflation.

Before the inspection was held, the school conducted a campaign urging every student — and other residents of the community — to bring bicycles for inspection. Under the supervision of the Patterson Park students, the younger boy and girl bike owners wheeled their bicycles from booth to booth for the various inspection phases. When a rider passed the inspection, he was given a membership card to the Safety Club of Baltimore, and strips of reflector tape were put on the front and rear of his bicycle by a member of the Optimist Club, cosponsors of the project.

Evaluation of Civic Participation

There has been no attempt as yet to scientifically evaluate the progress of the civic participation program. The plan started as a simple experiment in community understanding at Patterson Park High School. Students were given none of the social attiutdes tests before and after exposure to the plan, no control groups were set up so as to enable comparisons.

Yet while the evaluative evidence is only subjective, it is of such strong character as to warrant serious consideration for civic participation.

There were, without question, results among students in civic appreciation, tolerance, social skills, emotional maturation, and general cosmopolitansim; there was real training in citizenship. There were concomitant effects upon adult citizens of the community and most important of all the community itself was improved as a result of these experiences.

It is felt that excerpts from students' written reports and radio broadcasts, as well as written comments by cooperating agency leaders will effectively demonstrate the value of civic participation.

It is not the intent to claim that these examples are typical in pupil sensitivity in expression; instead, they are offered as the more articulate examples of a general sincerity among students concerning the value of the course:

> The people of our City can't possibly realize the great work our agencies are doing to help make Baltimore a better place to live in. But I can because I have had the opportunity to help out in one of them. . .Charles Wyble

> The civic participation program is especially worthwhile since it is designed for senior high school students, students that will be the future citizens. If they begin to realize now the advantages of a cooperative community, they, as the future citizens will try to make their community just that way. . .Evelyn Neuberger

I've heard numerous people state that they wish they could move to a better neighborhood. They don't seem to realize that they are a part of their community and when they condemn it, they condemn themselves. They don't seem to realize that there are many agencies and departments around their neighborhood to make their environment and the environment of their children a decent one in which to live. Through civic participation, I know that I can make the environment of my children a decent one in which to live. . . Christopher Sagos

The Eastern Community Council has successfully proven that leadership is available in a given community if outlets are provided for the development of same. An interested and informed group who are willing to study and learn the needs of the community is most essential. To know the services are available to meet the unmet needs is as important as the desire to seek those services. . .Donald Haas

By actually watching these people in action, doing their daily work I learned more about their particular field than I would have, after reading several pages of literature on the subject. I know someone could have lectured all day on slum areas or homes for the feeble-minded, but if I had not seen these things for myself I would not have believed him. When we go out on these visits we come into contact with all types of people and learn how to conduct ourselves accordingly. Working along with the Housing Authority has proven to be very educational. We have to use their files in doing the work for them and it is hard to believe some of the facts we sometimes come face to face with. . .Donald Hughes

We also meet the volunteers behind the leaders, who do so much in these projects. These leaders train the students in the problems of everyday life, such as the slum problem, the traffic conditions, health education and the general improvement of our lives. We see the benefits of the hard work of these agencies which most of us took for granted before, without realizing the amount of work involved. We ourselves do some of the work of which we are capable and thus learn first hand about the real work and planning which is necessary for the benefit of the people of Baltimore. . . Edward Bryl

This neighborhood was approximately ninety-eight per cent Negro, and this too helped our boys who worked there. By working with Negroes, we learned to associate with them, to talk with them, and to observe their living conditions. We learned how to cooperate with them and how to act when in their presence. . .Michael Savarese

<u>An experience with mental hospital patients</u>

It is March 2, 1949, in a car somewhere on the road to Spring Grove Mental Hospital. In the car there are six people, one of whom is I. As the car rolls monotonously along, the hum of the motor keeps time with the conversation of five of

dreadful task ahead. I am wondering why I should be worried with the cares and troubles of crazy people. Suddenly we stop. We have entered the gates of the living dead. We walk to the women's ward and enter.

Upon seeing the faces of the inmates I find my feeling of indifference changing to one of fear and compassion. Their faces, hard and sullen, build up within me an explosive tension.

Then it happens. I see a smile, not a big smile of victory, but one of friendship or the want thereof. The smile is enough to open my eyes and reveal that I have been wrong. These are not animals, but people like me.

I walk amidst these people and smile, for I am no longer afraid. When we leave, they shake my hand, still smiling, and invite me to return.

As we drive back, I realize we have left the old me behind. But it doesn't matter, for I have been reborn a thousand times by the smiles of the inmates. I am wiser now, for I know that all things were meant to be, even as were these people, to open the door of my heart for the entrance of pity . . . Ohlen Hunt

* * *

While at Chick Webb Negro Recreation Center, Marie and I played a game of pool, and the Negro instructor there helped us. At first he was timid probably because he was not certain of our true beliefs. But as the game progressed, I think that with very little effort on the part of both parties all the barriers were eliminated. This proved to me that both races can work together. And I felt good.

Just before Marie and I left, we said good-bye to Mr. Nixon, and I offered him my hand in friendship. When he accepted it, I don't think that you could have found a prouder girl on this earth. . .Rose Marie Kobylarz

What Happens To Participants

You may ask, "How does civic participation aid pupils in making a better community?" First of all, they visit other sections of the city and find out how other people live. Secondly, the agencies they visit, teach them what is being done to improve the health, safety, recreational and welfare facilities of the community. When their eyes are opened to the terrible slum conditions, the unsafe traffic conditions and the state mental hospitals — there is no suitable adjective to describe the latter — they are shocked! But they learn fast and they soon realize that all this is happening in their native city of Baltimore. A sense of belonging begins to creep into their maturing bodies. Some begin to

work voluntarily with the Red Cross. Their reaction on the visit to the blighted areas might be summed up by a statement of one of the students, "Gee, we don't know how lucky we are after visiting the homes of these people and seeing how they live."

What Donald Brodsky, a student, says

> Finally, let me summarize how this course helps youth to make a better community. The mother who sees her boy off to high school well provided, as she believes, with all he needs -- a good breakfast, adequate clothing, his lunch and ten cents -- feels that she is sending him to a fine privilege. Actually, everything in him is itching to be up and doing, to be using his hands, his body and his energies.
>
> For many boys and girls the years at high school represent nothing more than an endurance contest. They need to assure themselves that they are real people, that they belong, that they amount to something. And they need to prove themselves in the eyes of each other, to make a place for themselves in the esteem of their friends and their parents.
>
> Youth needs the experience of working with adults as a way of learning how to live with adults in the daily situations and relationships of genuine work. He needs the opportunity to find out what his capacities are in the terms of the actual work that is being done in the world. The adolescent needs the opportunity to demonstrate his worth as a member of the working community, not merely as a clever performer of specialty stunts on the playing field or as a maker of exhibition pieces in formal contests. He needs the opportunity to produce and create in terms that the workaday world will recognize.
>
> The civic participation course provides these opportunities; it is a stepping stone in preparation for acceptance as a solid citizen and member of the community. . .Donald Brodsky

What a Housing Authority representative says

> The Housing Authority of Baltimore City is well pleased with the arrangements and extremely gratified with the short term results concerning the civic participation course students from the Patterson Park High School. The benefits arrived at to date, it seems to me, stem largely from the fact that the experiences the boys have here are real and not manufactured for their benefit.
>
> The work they have performed is useful. That in itself gives them the feeling of purposeful participation in a public service agency that can be transmitted in no other way.
>
> The high degree of enthusiasm displayed by the boys in their current project here attests to the boys' attitude towards civic experience.

We are more than glad to cooperate in this learning-by-doing method. I feel that our employees gain a lot by the association, and the contributions made by the students to the Authority is not to be overlooked or underestimated either.

If the long-term results of the civic participation course are as fruitful as the immediate short-term results, the investment is a sound one from both our points of view . . . Robert S. Moyer, Housing Authority of Baltimore

What the Director of the Eastern Community Council says

In evaluating the project, it is significant that here is a participation type program which provides a valuable service in four directions: (1) to the student; (2) to the local residents; (3) to the city-wide Civil Defense program; and (4) to the local Civil Defense organization.

It has had the effect of impressing upon the student the need for community interest and participation in volunteer programs; in giving the students an opportunity to visit homes and meet people who were strangers, in many cases, to their own mode of living; and it helps the students to overcome their natural reticence in this kind ofactivity. The students themselves have spoken of the program generally as quite satisfying, although their first impressions are hardly that.

The program has aroused interst in Civil Defense among the local residents. Certainly the 39% who answered negatively to the first question have now heard of Civil Defense. Others are assured that activity is taking place on the local level.

There are adults in the Council committee who believe that such a program helps in modifying attitudes toward young people by residents who have been interviewed when they see that the students are interested in the community. The ethnic structure of the community, particularly as it applies to nationality background, is such that this phase alone represents an important one to the Community Council. The city-wide Civil Defense Director, Col. Frank Milani, has stated by letter that it is a valuable experiment and, in the near future, the results will be passed on to other local district coordinators. Certainly the mediums most successful as shown by the survey should receive more emphasis, and an effort made to strengthen the value and use of the other mediums.

The work of the local Civil Defense coordinators has been simplified because an ititial contact has been made which shows some interst. When the time arrives for house-to-house population, resource, and physical study by the local Civil Defense organization the task will be much easier. It has helped to bring home the importance of personal contact in recruiting, planning, training, etc.

It is my opinion that the program has been more successful than we had anticipated. The desire and ability of the students has been most gratifying. . .Michael Kelley, Executive Secretary, Eastern Community Council

CONCLUSION

There has been justifiable pride connected with the results of this project. The results are such as to warrant a reasonable degree of self-approbation and even to venture the recommendation of the course of civic participation to other schools and communities.

This description of the plan's inception, background, and implementation has been presented in the hope that practicality will permit the achievement of an ideal program for developing real citizenship in the citizens-to-be.

There is little that is startling in the factors that have made the program workable at Patterson Park. Inspirational top leadership, close contact with cooperative agencies, careful planning, judicious selection of students -- especially at first, and civic-minded, harmonizing teaching are not scarce ingredients. They have aided civic participation to success in Baltimore; they can make it succeed elsewhere.

Baltimore Public Schools

Second Draft, March 1953